

**MaozNews Special Bulletin
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Rocket attacks on southern Israel continue near Be'er Sheva and in the communities surrounding the Gaza Strip. On Saturday morning, several Grad rockets fired from the Gaza Strip hit the southern city of Ashdod, critically wounding three Palestinian workers, who were rushed to hospital with shrapnel wounds in their chests and necks. A mortar fell in the Sha'ar Hanegev Regional Council causing damage to a building, followed by four more, two rockets in the Be'er Tuvia Regional Council, and another near the city of Ashkelon. No injuries or damage were reported.

Lebanon, presently a member of the UN Security Council, stymied a proposal to condemn the attacks on Israeli citizens. A draft proposal for was distributed to the Security Council's fifteen members Thursday. The United States, Europe and India vigorously supported a UN denunciation of the attack against Israel. Lebanon would endorse the censure only if it is "balanced" with a condemnation of Israel's retaliatory strikes in the Gaza Strip. Europe, the US and Israel rejected the Lebanese equation, in essence burying the condemnation and demonstrating yet again that the UN is unable to address some of the most vital issues on its agenda.

Referring to the UN failure to condemn the terror offensive, Israeli Ambassador Prozor said that "we are dealing with a blatantly clear terror attack against innocent Israeli civilians. The UN secretary general condemned the attack, the Americans condemned it, the European Union condemned it, yet the bottom line is that the Security Council again failed as a body. ... Every time an issue pertains to Israel, we encounter a deafening silence."

Palestinian spokesmen were quick to issue scathing condemnation: "Israel's madness will not deter the Palestinian leadership from appealing to the UN," he said. He further alleged that Israel was looking for an excuse to impose collective punishment against the Palestinian people, saying: "This is a war crime." Later Friday, Hamas' military wing also condemned what it referred to as an Israeli "massacre,"

Egypt has called home its Ambassador to Israel following the deaths of three Egyptian soldiers in Sinai, and demanded an Israeli apology. The three were caught in the line of fire between Israeli troops and fleeing terrorists who had taken part in the Friday attack. Israel has expressed its deep regret and thanked Egypt for its cooperation and strenuous efforts to reassume control of the Sinai Peninsula. On Saturday afternoon, IAF aircraft targeted a squad of Palestinian militants in Gaza that fired mortars at Israeli cities.

Hamas' military wing, the Izz-a-din Al-kassam, has declared an end to the *de facto* truce with Israel which was in place since Israel's full scale military action in Gaza following 8 years of

rocket and mortar attacks against Israeli cities and towns. Egypt is seeking to reestablish the truce and has approached Israel and the Hamas.

Israel has stated its determination to defend its citizens and called upon Hamas to bring an end to attacks from the Gaza Strip, regardless of who may be initiating these. Israel also said that, once such attacks come to an end, its own retaliatory actions will likewise end.

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